WE CLAIM:

1. A belt comprising (a) a polishing surface for polishing a workpiece in a chemical mechanical linear polishing system and (b) a side opposite the polishing surface, the belt forming an endless loop, an improvement comprising at least one aperture through the belt so that the aperture is substantially free of a window.

2. The belt of Claim 1 wherein the belt has two substantially parallel edges and the aperture is centered between the two substantially parallel edges.

3. The belt of Claim 1 wherein the aperture comprises a substantially circular shape.

4. The belt of Claim 1 wherein the belt has at least three apertures through the belt.

5. The belt of Claim 4 wherein the at least three apertures are spaced evenly around the endless loop.

6. The belt of Claim 1 further comprising a notch along a first edge of the belt, the notch positioned relative to the aperture.

7. The belt of Claim 1 further comprising a trigger aperture positioned relative to the aperture.

8. A system for polishing a workpiece in a chemical mechanical polishing process, the system comprising:

a monitor; and

an endless belt positioned adjacent to the monitor, the endless belt having at least one aperture through the belt wherein a path through the aperture

from the workpiece to the monitor is unobstructed, the aperture being substantially free of a window.

9. The system of Claim 8 wherein the endless belt has two substantially parallel edges and the aperture is centered between the two substantially parallel edges.

10. The system of Claim 8 wherein the endless belt has at least three apertures.

11. The system of Claim 8 wherein the endless belt has a notch or trigger aperture along a first edge of the belt, the notch or trigger aperture positioned relative to the aperture, wherein activation of the monitor is responsive to a position of the notch or trigger aperture relative to the workpiece.

12. The system of Claim 8 further comprising a slurry dispenser positioned adjacent to a polishing side of the endless belt.

13. The system of Claim 12 further comprising a platen adapted to apply water to the endless belt.

14. The system of Claim 13 wherein the water is operable to prevent drying of the slurry and to substantially clear a platen of slurry.

15. The system of Claim 13 wherein the platen is adapted to apply air to the endless belt.

16. A method for polishing a workpiece in a chemical mechanical polishing process, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) passing an endless belt along a workpiece, the endless belt having an aperture through the belt, the aperture being free of a window; and

(b) measuring a property of the workpiece through the aperture, a path through the aperture for measuring the workpiece being unobstructed by the aperture in the belt.

17. The method of Claim 16 wherein step (a) comprises passing a plurality of spaced apart apertures along the workpiece.

18. The method of Claim 16 wherein step (b) comprises directing a beam of light at the workpiece through the aperture.

19. The method of Claim 16 further comprising:

(c) triggering step (b) in response to a position of a trigger notch or aperture relative to the workpiece.

20. The method of Claim 16 further comprising:

(c) applying slurry to a polishing side of the endless belt, a portion of the polishing side being adjacent to the workpiece.

21. The method of Claim 20 further comprising:

(d) applying pressure to the endless belt with water.

22. The method of Claim 21 further comprising:

(e) preventing blockage by dry slurry in aperture on a platen with the water of step (d); and

(f) clearing slurry from the aperture on the platen with the water of step (d).

23. The method of Claim 21 further comprising:

(e) applying pressure to the endless belt with air.

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